Student Affairs Committee

Report to the Academic Senate
April 28, 2011

Jim Aumer, Chair
Study student (academic) misconduct policies in consultation with Dawn Soufleris in Student Affairs and each college to insure that rights and responsibilities for students and faculty are clearly articulated and understood. This policy should establish consistent and fair processes across campus and enable centralized tracking and monitoring of repeat offenders.
RIT’s current Academic Honesty Policy may be considered unclear and incomplete

Approved
September 1977

Was last revised
May 18, 2002

a copy has been provided to the Senate for reference
Committee Analysis

RIT’s current Academic Dishonesty process *(Policy Number: D17.0)*
When acts of academic dishonesty transpire, the following procedures may occur:

- Instructor assembles evidence and makes an initial determination of appropriate action
- Instructor meets informally with student to discuss action
- If student objects, instructor arranges meeting with supervisor
- If unresolved, case is referred to the College Academic Conduct Committee for judgment
- In severe cases, the Academic Conduct Committee may recommend academic suspension or dismissal
- Student can appeal judgment to the Academic Appeals Sub-Committee of the Institute Appeals Board *(see Policy D18.0, section VI)*
Committee Analysis

RIT’s current consequences

After notifying and presenting student with evidence, the instructor may:

- assign an “F” for the offense
- assign an “F” for the course

A student may:

- be brought before the Academic Conduct Committee of the college in which the alleged offense occurred
- face academic suspension or dismissal from the university
Committee Determinations

After examination and review of individual college processes and policies the committee has determined:

► There are inconsistent practices across colleges

► There is insufficient notification/discussion/education at the student level

► There is insufficient education/training for instructors on the policy and process

► There is no centralized tracking system

► Colleges have instances where they have failed to follow their own policies

► Some college-level Academic Misconduct processes/committee structures are in conflict with RIT policy
Add a more detailed rationale to the Institute policy that affirms academic integrity as a central value and supports the following principles:

- The purpose of education is to attain knowledge and skills and can only be achieved through honest work.
- “Education flourishes in a climate of trust” and of “respect for intellectual and artistic labor.”
- RIT’s reputation and the value of an RIT degree are dependent on the genuine accomplishments of RIT graduates.
- “An act of academic dishonesty jeopardizes all members of our community.”
Revise the THREE categories on RIT’s current Academic Dishonesty Policy to include specific examples to update and further clarify, such as:

1. Alteration of an assignment
2. Fabrication of a citation
3. Obtaining or reading a copy of the examination prior to the test being administered
4. Use of electronic devices to copy, or in other ways provide an advantage
5. Visual plagiarism
6. Using another’s intellectual property
7. Collusion as defined by the separate colleges
Add **TWO new categories** to RIT’s current Academic Dishonesty Policy to update and further clarify:

1. Facilitating academic dishonesty
2. Other forms of dishonest conduct

**Facilitating academic dishonesty** is assisting another student in academic dishonesty. Examples include (but are not limited to) collusion, assisting another student on a take-home examination, paper or assignment, allowing another student to copy from one’s examination, paper or assignment, writing a paper or doing a project or assignment for another student.

**Other forms of dishonest conduct** include a student acting in such a way that gives him/her an unfair advantage over another. For example, destroying or altering the work of another student.
Committee Recommendations

- Eliminate existing college-based Academic Misconduct Committees.
- Establish a single centralized Academic Misconduct Committee.
- Add a new grade of “XF” (failure due to academic dishonesty).
- Permit student to petition to have the X removed after completing an educational process.
Committee Recommendations

- Increase education and training of instructors and students within colleges regarding academic dishonesty and areas that are specific to that college.

- Increase education and training of instructors and students within colleges regarding the academic misconduct process.

- Require instructors to reference the official RIT Academic Dishonesty Policy on his/her syllabi.
Establish a centralized Academic Conduct Office to record and store data for tracking purposes.

The following 3 slides exemplify a centralized model.
Example of a Centralized Model

1. Instructor completes an Academic Integrity Violation Form
2. Instructor meets with student
3. If an alleged violation is confirmed, a copy of the form is given to the student and to the Academic Conduct Office

OR
3. If no violation is confirmed, the form is destroyed; and the matter resolved
4 Academic Conduct Office meets with student to explore options:
   • Accept sanctions recommended by the instructor
   • Contest the severity of the instructor’s recommendations
   • Contest the allegation of academic misconduct and schedule hearing with a centralized Academic Misconduct Committee

5 Academic Integrity Violation File established
6. Repeat violators automatically trigger an Academic Misconduct Committee hearing.

7. Appeals of Academic Misconduct Committee referred to the Institute Appeals Board.
A move to a Centralized Academic Misconduct Model is a substantial shift from current RIT practice, process and policy. As such, we propose the Provost establish a task force to implement these changes.
Committee Members

Jim Aumer, Chair (COS)
Deborah Blizzard (CLA)
Ed Brown (KGCOE)
Linda Bryant (NTID)
Belinda Bryce (HEOP Director)
Cara Calvelli (COS)
Steve Ciccarelli (CAST)
Kathy Davis (NTID)
Vincent DiCairano (SG CIAS Senator)
Carol Fillip (CIAS)
Marissa Giambrone (SG Director of Public Relations)
Greg Pollock (SG President)
Bill Stackpole (GCCIS)
John Ward (SCB)
John Weas (Student Affairs, Delegate for Mary-Beth Cooper)
Sources

California Polytechnic State University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Rochester Institute of Technology
University of Maine at Farmington

“Discipline Models for Managing Academic Misconduct”
created by the Student Affairs Leadership Council
from The Advisory Board Company, Washington, DC, 2009